

THE
 Pretended Yearly Meeting
 OF THE
QUAKERS,
 THEIR
Nameless Bull
 OF
 EXCOMMUNICATION



Given forth against

George Keith,

From a Party or Faction of Men that call themselves the *Yearly Meeting*, which they would have to be received, as the general Judgment, and Sentence of the *Quakers*.

With a brief Answer to the same, shewing that for his Zealous and Consciencious opposing their gross Errors, and reproving the evil and wicked Practises of them in *Pennsylvania*, whom they own to be their Brethren, particularly their Persecution of *G. Keith*, and some of his Friends, that party has Excommunicated him.

Printed for R. Lewis, 1695.

At the Yearly Meeting in London, the 17.
of the 3d. Month. 1695.

This Meeting taking notice of the Judgment and Advice of the last Yearly Meeting, concerning George Keith, and inquiring whether he had Answered the Sense and Advice, which in the Name of the Lord, that Meeting then delivered to him, both find that he hath not only not followed the Christian Advice and Judgment of that Meeting; but hath Rejected it, and Printed against it, denying it to be the Judgment or Sense of the Yearly Meeting, and affirming that Meeting that gave it forth, not to be the Yearly Meeting, but a party or Faction.

And also, That he hath, since the last Yearly Meeting, been very troublesome and burthensome to Friends in publick Meetings in and about this City, as was Testified in his presence by many faithful Friends, who were Eye and Ear Witnesses thereof. And in this Meeting the said Geo. Keith, did openly Read a Paper of his, containing Reflections, Accusations and Exceptions against divers Friends, that are members of this Meeting, in which Paper he Justifieth himself in those things, for which the last Yearly Meeting Reproved and Censured him, and in what he hath Printed since. And being afterwards desired to come into the Meeting again, and acquainted with the great dissatisfaction which the Meeting had concerning him, with respect to what he had printed, spoken and done against Truth and Friends; he brake forth into great disorder, and very unseemly behaviour, uttering many bitter and unsavoury Expressions, and in a very angry manner rose up, and departed before the further Sense and Judgment of the Meeting could be given him.

All which this Meeting taking into their weighty Consideration, and being fully satisfied, both by his Printed Books and other outward Evidences, with respect to matters of Fact, and by that Divine Sense, which in the openings of the Heavenly Life, ran as a mighty Stream through the meeting, and was confirmed and sealed by many living Testimonies, born in the Name of the Lord, and in the powerful demonstration

stration of the Holy Spirit ; That the said Geo. Keith, of late hath been, and yet is acted by an unchristian Spirit, which hath moved and led him to stir up contention and strife in the Church of Christ, and to cause Divisions, Separations and Breaches amongst them that profess the Truth and that the tendency of divers of his late writings and actings hath been to Expose the Truth, and the Friends thereof to the Reproach of the World, did unanimously agree, and declare it to be the Sense and Judgment of this meeting ; And it is the sense and judgment of this Meeting, That the said George Keith is gone from the blessed Unity of the peaceable Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ, and hath thereby separated himself from the Holy Fellowship of the Church of Christ, and that whilst he is in an unreconciled and uncharitable state, he ought not to preach or pray in any Friends Meetings, nor be Owned or Received as one of Us, until by a publick and hearty Acknowledgment of the great Offence he hath given, and hurt he hath done, and Condemnation of himself therefore, he give Proof of his unfeigned Repentance, and do his endeavour to remove and take off the Reproach he hath brought upon Truth and Friends, which in the love of God, we heartily desire for his Souls sake.

Signed by appointment of
the Yearly Meeting,
and in behalf thereof
as their Aſs, which is
to my own certain
knowledge.

Benjamin Bealing.

*A brief Answer to the foregoing Nameless
BULL of Excommunication.*

A Paper bearing this Title, *At the Yearly Meeting in London, the 17th of the 3d Month, 1695.* And having at the end of it these following words, *Signed by the appointment of the Yearly Meeting, and in behalf thereof, as their Act, which is to my certain knowledg,* Benjamin Bealing, came to my House, and was delivered to some in my Family, the 17th of this Instant 1695; the which Paper mentioneth no sort of People, nor what sort of yearly meeting it came from; and tho it is signed by one *Benj. Bealing*, who saith he signed it by the apointment of the Yearly Meeting (yet he telleth not what *Yearly Meeting*) did so appoint him; and whereas he saith to his own certain Knowledge, is that enough? How doth he make it appear to others, that it is to his own certain knowledg? Is it either Christian or Human, or agreeable to any civil Constitution, or Religious Society, to give forth a defamatory Paper in the Name of a People, and not tell who or what that People is? And tho I do not in the least pretend ignorance, so as not to know some particular persons who have had a main hand in it, and whose work principally it is; yet it appeareth not whom they mean by what they call the Yearly Meeting; if granted it comes from that called the Yearly Meeting of the People called *Quakers*, as whether they mean only such a select number consisting of two persons, sent up to *London*, from every County in *England*, and *Wales*, or from every Quarterly Meeting in the several Counties, together with them they call *Publick Friends*, or *Friends of the Ministry*, who assume a Power to make Laws, and give forth Edicts or Decrees to bind and oblige the Consciences of all these many thousands in the three Nations, and other places of the World, that go under the outward profession and denomination of *Quakers*, and profess to be one Body of People with them. And that this select number of Ministers, and chosen members from the several Counties, who in great part are Ministers, and Pensioners paid by the respective Counties for that Service, and oft designedly chosen to bring to effect
some.

something contrived beforehand by a particular Cabal of some particular persons, excluding generally others of the same Profession, whom they own to be in Unity with them, from being members in the said Yearly Meeting, or from being privileged to meddle in Church Affairs with them. If this is meant by the Yearly Meeting, that hath sent this Paper to me; I disown all such constitution of a Yearly Meeting, as not only not being warranted by Scripture, but contradictory thereunto; and also to the received and approved Doctrine in *R. B.* his Book, called the *Anarchy, &c.* highly approved by the Principal Teachers and Leaders among the People called *Quakers*, and hath been twice Printed by them, and great use hath been made of it, especially against such as have differed from them about some particular cases, and circumstances of Church Discipline and Government. For thus he saith, p. 78, 79. (giving some of the differences berwixt the *Romanists*, and the generality of these called Protestants on the one hand, and the People called *Quakers* on the other hand) *That whereas those in matters of difference, only allow these of the Clergy, so called, i. e. the Ministry, to give a Judgment with other select persons chosen, the People called Quakers exclude no Member of the Church to give his Judgment.* See further to the same purpose, p. 81. 85. And I further say, For any number of men to assume a Power, in an assembly, to extend to all others, as suppose many thousands, that what judgment, or sentence they shall pass, relating either to things of Religion, or Persons, shall oblige the Consciences of all these thousands under the same profession, or professed Unity with them, is directly contrary to that Christian Liberty wherewith Christ has made every true Christian free, and is a Popish and Tyrannical Invasion, and Usurpation over Mens Consciences, which as I have formerly born my Testimony against, so I still do. And it is apparent enough, that such who have given out this Paper against we, was not any free Meeting, where any that have a mind (owned by them to be in Unity) might not be present, and freely give their Judgment, without any Threatning or Terrification, because, to my certain Knowledge, and Observation, I saw the Door of the Meeting, where that called the Yearly Meeting Sate, kept by three or four persons, that refused to let in, some that desired to come in, and yet were owned by them, and it is sufficiently known, they who keep the Door let in or keep out such as they think fit: But again, such whom they let in, if they be not of the Ministry, nor any of the two chosen out of every County, they are allowed only to be there as standers by, and Spectators, but have no allowance to give any Judgment in the Case, which hath been a discouragement to some Honest Friends, owned by the Yearly Meeting as Friends, from coming to the Meeting, being only permitted to be there as Ciphers.

And yet further, It is sufficiently known, the way that they take, either by persuasions or terrifications to gain the universal and unanimous consent of them, called, *The Commissioners, or chosen Members from every County,*

Country; as doth plainly appear by the late most absurd and insolent method, more like the *Spanish Inquisition*, than a free Assembly of sincere Christians, they did take with a Preacher, one of their Commissioners, or chosen Members, who having said in private, out of the Meeting, he could sooner Die, or loose his Right-Hand, than sign to a Paper disowning *George Keith*, which coming to their Intelligence, that there was such a Person, but not knowing who he was, they were so earnest to find him out, that they caused call over the Roll, or list of the Names of the Persons sent from the respective Counties, to find out this person, asking them one by one, to find him out, and the poor man, not daring to lye, owned he was the Person, and being terrified, lest he should be severely proceeded against by them; he came (with some others to be Witnesses to his Recantation) and disowned to me what he had formerly said, tho a few hours before, he professed so great a concern and tenderness of Conscience towards me. This passage is so considerable an advance towards the erecting the *Spanish Inquisition* among the *Quakers*, that I hope some will be awakened to take notice of it, and withstand it.

And lastly, Whatever they may boast of their Act against me, as being the unanimous Act of the Yearly Meeting; yet seeing many present, owned to be Friends in Unity with them, gave no signification of their owning that sentence; and I am loth to be so uncharitable as to think they did own it, not being so much as enquired, whether they did or not, being considered as Members; and that divers, some whereof I have a certain knowledge, did voluntarily and purposely absent from the Meeting, lest any such thing should be required of them, as to own such an unrighteous Act, tho it had been more Noble, and more like a free Christian Spirit purposely to have come (if they had found entrance) and Witnessed against it: But what the design of this Omission is for them, to send forth a nameless Paper against me, which is to go over all places of the World, where the People called *Quakers* have their Meetings, declaring it to be their sense, That I ought not to Preach and Pray in any of Friends Meetings, nor be owned and received as one of them; ye see it is of an universal extent, without all Limitation of places, which is to make their Yearly Meeting at *London*, consisting of a few particulars, as Universal as the Church of *Rome* maketh her self to be; I say, it is worthy of enquiry what the design is, that such an Edict or Sentence should go forth against me, from an Assembly or Meeting, who give themselves no particular designation, Name, or Denomination of distinction from other People. Is it not this plain Evidence in matter of Fact, that this their Judgment or Sentence against me is a work of Darkness, acted and brought forth in the Dark, notwithstanding all their high pretences to the light, and to act and do all in the light? Is it not a Birth without a legitimate Father, a Nameless Child, having no proper Name to distinguish it, as Bastards frequently and Fondlings, have no proper Names whereby to know their true Fathers?

As for the Contents of the said Bull, as it is nameless, so it may be said to have neither Horns, nor Teeth, nor any thing of just matter or substance, which they in particular charge against me, consisting almost wholly in bare generals, which prove nothing. They alledg they are satisfied, both by my printed Books, and other outward Evidences, with respect to matters of Fact, and by that Divine sense, &c. That the said *George Keith* hath been of late, and yet is acted by an unchristian Spirit. But this is only said, but no passages in any of my Books brought against me, to satisfy any moderate inquirer, nor any outward Evidence, with respect to matter of Fact, so much as alledged to prove their general Charge; and as for the pretence to a Divine sense, it is but vain and presumptuous, so to judg a Man to be of an unchristian Spirit, without external Evidence in matter of Doctrine and Fact brought against me, none of which they have brought. And seeing by that which they call a Divine Sense, they have falliely and unjustly judged me, without giving any proof of their charge. I am bold and free in my Spirit to say their Sense is not Divine, but Carnal, and Sensual, for no Divine Sense will lead any man, or men to be false Accusers. But whereas they say, the Divine Sense in the openings of the Heavenly Life, ran, as a mighty stream, through the Meeting, they writ nonsensicallly, confounding the Life, with the sense that the Life gives, for it is most improper to say, That mens sense runs through a Meeting, tho the Life that gives it doth in the Assembly of the Faithful, as it sealeth to a Righteous Judgment; but this their Judgment being unrighteous, it hath neither the Divine Life nor Sense to seal it, but that a Power of Darknes might run through the Meeting, and deceive many by its false appearance of Life, is probable.

In my Paper I delivered to them at their Meeting, I demanded them to let me know what they had against me, either in Doctrine, or Manner of Life and Conversation, and was most willing to have been brought to a Trial before them, making my just exceptions against some persons, from being either Evidences against me, or Judges in the Case, because of their known Prejudice; but without all due Tryal. they have given out this Nameless Bull against me, having nothing of any real substance or matter of just occasion against me; and therefore it is but waste, either of Time or Paper, to give them any other but a general Answer to their bare general Charge, having sufficiently, by way of Anticipation, to this their rash and imprudent Act, as well as injurious, cleared my self of all these general Charges they cast upon me, in my Paper I delivered to them at their Yearly meeting, and in the brief Narrative of the chief and most material Passages of discourse that passed betwixt some of them and me in the said Meeting at two several times, both lately Printed together, wherein I answer at length to their general and indefinit Accusation. That I have not followed the Christian Advice and Judgment of the last Yearly Meeting; but if they had not been Conscious to themselves, that that part of it I did not follow, and for which they have given out this
rash,

rash, and injurious Sentence against me, was unchristian ; why did they not particularly, and distinctly mention that Advise, ' Which was to clear ' the Body of the People called *Quakers*, and their *Ministers* from the ' gross Errors charged on some in *America*, which I have with a good Conscience refused to do, because to my certain knowledge, and which I offered at their Meeting, to prove some of their chief Teachers, present in the said Meeting, are guilty of divers of the same gross Errors charged on some in *America*, and which I have in part sufficiently demonstrated in Print, in that called a List.

And as I have occasion, may further demonstrate out of their own Printed Books. But let none think strange that I have not made this discovery of their gross Errors till now, at least so to expose them in Print, for I sincerely declare that the worst and grossest sort of their Errors, whom I now expose to publick view ; I did not know they were guilty of them, or that they were to be found in their Books but of late times, and after I had discovered them, to my own certain knowledge, I was willing to exercise Christian Patience ; if by any means, they might have been persuaded, to have Corrected them, having privately warned and admonished some of them, and having also at divers times in a general way of Testimony in their hearing, declared against these Errors. But instead of their hearkening to my Testimony, and amending these Errors, they became my Enemy for telling them the Truth ; and now they having cut off all hope or expectation, that they will receive any brotherly Advice from me, by this their most Hostile way of appearing against me, I am constrain'd thus to appear, not in any Enmity against them, but in Love to the Truth, and the Honour of it, which I ought to Love and Honour above all men, and also in Love to the Souls of many ignorant persons, whom they have Blinded and Darkned, and led into these gross Errors, to the great danger of the Salvation of their Souls, that they might be undeceived. And whereas they make it a matter of Accusation against me, that I denied that Paper, called *A true Account*, which they call *The Christian Advice and Judgment of the Yearly Meeting*, to be the Judgment or Sense of the Yearly Meeting, affirming that *Meeting* that gave it forth, not to be the *Yearly Meeting*, but a Party or Faction, which is the only true particular thing that I observe in all their *Nameless Bull*, that they bring against me. Is this so hainous a matter, to deserve Excommunication, and totally to be Rejected and downed, not only as a *Minister*, but as one of that People. We see to what a great height they are come to, in a short time, *Rome* did not arise to that height in full ten times the length of time, that this which calleth it self the *Yearly Meeting*, and Church of Christ, hath raised it self unto, within the space of a few years ; So that if a man will but speak a word concerning the *Yearly Meeting* of the People called *Quakers*, that it is not a free *Meeting* not duly constituted, tho he can ever so Evidently prove it, as I have done sufficiently, no less censure shall pass on him than an Excommunication

munication, and off-cutting. But thanks be to God, whatever humane Authority they usurp, to cut me off from some particular visible Meetings or Persons, they have no Divine authority or Power, to cut me off either from Christ, or his faithful Followers, and their Bull is but an empty blast of Air, that hath not killed, nor I hope ever shall kill the Life of my Soul, or that Holy Fellowship, I have had, and still have with a faithful and sincere Remnant among that People; and for all their enmity hatred, reproaches, revilings, curses, woes and plagues that they have poured out against me, in publick Meetings, both in Preaching and Prayer, acted to besure by an unchristian Spirit, I return them Love and Goodwil, blessing for cursing, good for evil, earnestly Praying that God may give them Repentance, and Forgiveness, for this their unchristian way of Proceeding against me, and for all their other Errors, and that they may be recovered both out of the many gross Errors, they are held in, by the power of Darkness, notwithstanding their high pretences to Light; and also out of their height of Pride, and self Exaltation, which God in his great mercy grant, if it be his blessed will; and it is my great comfort, that notwithstanding their great Provocations, I never felt a Curse, or any thing like it, either in my mouth, or heart against any. And they may be greatly ashamed to accuse me, in this their nameless Bull, as they do; if they were not greatly hardened, that I have been very troublesome, and burthensome to Friends in publick, meetings, since the last Yearly Meeting, which being but a bare general without mentioning any particular words or deeds, or gesture, wherein I was such, I might reject as little worth noticing.

But I cannot well let pass their exceeding great Partiality, in taking no notice of the great Abuses, and most unchristian usages I have received from time to time, from some of their chief Preachers by most uncivil Interruptions, contrary not only to the Gospel-order, but to the Law of the Nation, whereas none can truly say, that ever I interrupted any of them; also by their moving themselves to Preach and Pray, and moving one another, and so closely speaking one after another on purpose to Exclude my Testimony; and their most bitter Reflections, Revilings, Reproaches, false Acculations, false Prophecies and Curses that divers of them have poured out against me, as particularly *Charles Marshal, W. Penn, W. Bingley, and J. Vaughton*, both in Preaching and Prayer; and tho *G. Whitehead* hath carried it a little more smoothly, than those others, yet his prejudice hath sufficiently vented it self also against me in publick Meetings; yea, even in Prayer, and such profanations of Prayer in the pretended Exercise of their Extemporal Gift, assuming a most sinful liberty to vend their sinful passions, and animosities against them, at whom they are prejudiced, as it is abomination in the sight of God, so it is most loathsome and offensive to Men of tender Spirits, and giveth to many occasion to say, a set Form of Prayer, is less offensive, and more Edifying than such passionate Rapsodies, that too many

use, and yet do call them Praying by the Holy Spirit. But whatever pretences these men have against me, who have published this Nameless Bull, in accusing me of being Contentious, causing Divisions Separations and Breaches among Friends, and other bare general, but false Charges, which require no particular Answer, the bottom and foundation of all this, and of my being thought so burdensome and troublesome to them in Meetings, is because they cannot endure sound Doctrine, especially their deep prejudice against my frequent Preaching the great necessity of Faith in Christ Crucified, as necessary to Regeneration, Justification and eternal Salvation, and also the Resurrection of the Dead, and Christ's coming without us, in his Glorified Body, to Judge the Quick and the Dead; all which have seemed as new and strange Doctrine to them, and some have more directly, and some more indirectly opposed it, and about the time of the last Yearly Meeting, *William Edmonson* at the *Bull and Mouth*, in the hearing of hundreds, as well as in my hearing, boldly affirmed, *It was not needful to Preach Christ's Death and Sufferings in Friends Meetings.* *William Penn* lately affirmed at *Ratcliffe-Meeting*, (where he falsely accused me to be an Apostate,) *That Friends see not cause to Preach that Doctrine much, because all England and Christendom, have an Historical Belief of Christ's Death, and Sufferings, and it doth not profit them; and as it was the Dispensation of the Apostles to Preach Christ outwardly, it is our dispensation to Preach him inwardly.* *W. Bingley* hath Preached, *That People that come to Meetings generally believe well enough in Christ without, but they want to have Christ Preached within, that they may believe in him within;* thus making two Faiths. And to the same purpose hath *Charles Marshall* frequently Preached; and also several times he hath said in Publick Meetings, *It is not needful for a Man to stand up, and Preach Christ's Death and Sufferings from Morning to Evening, seeing it was generally Believed.* And also several times he Preached in publick Meetings, as at *Grace-Church-street*, and at *Devonshire-house*, *That the Conscience must first be purified, before Faith can be received.* Which false Doctrine I did several times contradict in publick, by showing that by true Faith the Conscience is Purged, and they go along together and by the Lively Exercise of Faith, the Conscience is gradually Purged, and not all at once. And *John Gratton* said about the time of the last Yearly Meeting, in the Publick Meeting in *Grace-Church-Street*, *To believe that Christ died, was the Drunkards Faith, and the Whoremongers Faith;* adding further, *That none had Benefit by Christ's Death, but such as are Dead with Christ.*

And thus generally they Declare their great ignorance of the true Faith of Christ's Death and sufferings, Resurrection, and Ascension, and Intercession, making it only an Historical and Literal Faith; whereas as there is an Historical and Literal Faith only of it, that Drunkards and ill Livers may have, as they may have of Christ within Notionally and Historically, so there is a living effectual Faith of Christ's Death and Sufferings,
wrought

wrought by the Living Power of God in the Hearts of sincere believers, which Power doth in God's ordinary way accompany the sincere Preaching of the Gospel, even outwardly, and other outward helps, and means of Justification, and all men have a Benefit by Christ's Death and Sufferings, to wit, a day of Visitation, and any Light and Grace that is inwardly given to men, and the way and manner to come to witness a Dying and Rising with Christ, is to believe by the Operation of the Spirit of God, that Christ Died for Mens Sins, and Rose again, and to believe that great Love of God, that he spared not his Son, but freely gave him for us, and also to believe the great Love of Christ, who freely gave himself for us, by which Faith men come to Witness a being Dead with Christ, and also a being Raised with him; and seeing this true Faith is wrought in God's ordinary way by Preaching, therefore the true Faith of Christ's Death and Sufferings ought to be one of the first and chiefest things that every true Minister ought to Preach, and build up his hearers in, in order to bring them to Communion with God, and Christ in Spirit; and that they may witness God and Christ, to dwell in them, and rule in them.

Another great cause of their passing this unjust Sentence against me, is, That I refused to call in the Book Printed since the last Yearly Meeting, called, *The Causeless Ground*, wherein I expostulate the case, not only with respect to their too great connivance of the vile and gross Errors, whereof I proved some guilty in *Pennsylvania*, owned by them to be their Brethren, but also, with respect to their Connivance at, and covering the evil practices of their Persecuting Brethren there, and their most illegal and arbitrary Proceedings against me, contrary to the Fundamental Laws of all Nations, to the danger of my Life, as well as of my Reputation; for the more particular account whereof, I refer the Reader, to the above cited Book, called, *The Causeless Ground*, and my Printed Answer to their Proclamation, and also to the Printed Tryal, relating to *Tb. Budd* and me, in the Book called, *New-England's Spirit of Persecution*, &c. And all this they have passed over, both in their former Yearly Meeting, 1694. and also in this last, 1695, without the least censure, a sufficient Evidence of their partiality, and that a prevailing Faction, or Party of corrupt Men, ruleth in that called the Yearly Meeting, and that therefore what Edict, or Judgment goeth forth from that pretended Yearly Meeting, ought not to be called the Act, or Judgment of the Body of that People, it being sufficiently known that many, even owned by them, as their Brethren here in *England*, and elsewhere, have greatly been dissatisfied with the Persecution raised against us by them in *Pennsylvania*, and have declared against it, as well as their other Proceedings. And had all there present at the Yearly Meeting, so called, been unanimous in their unjust Sentence against me, and ten times more a greater Number with them; yea, suppose they can get this their unjust Sentence against me, confirmed by all their Quarterly and Monthly Meetings in *England*, which yet I think

it will be a very hard, if not impossible thing for them to obtain, yet this doth not prove that they are not a Faction or Party, seeing it is sufficiently known, that for many Years past, there hath been a Breach amongst the People called *Quakers*, in relation to the Church Government of Women, and other Circumstantial Things, imposed by a Party among them.

Now of them, of the other side, that oppose some humane Impositions, called by some of the Imposers, but civil things, as many do well own, and approve me in my publick Testimony against the vile Errors, held by some of the contrary part; so I know not any that disown me, or that approve of this Sentence, that this Party that call themselves indefinitely, the Yearly Meeting, have given against me, and yet there is a considerable number and body of them.

And lastly, Whereas they seem to blame me, for my departing out of their Yearly Meeting, before the further sense and Judgment of the Meeting could be given me, which they say I did in a very angry manner. But they should have said divers of them, particularly *George Whitehead* and *Will. Penn* did in a most angry manner, most unjustly and falsely accuse me, and behave themselves most unchristianly towards me, as will appear by the Printed Narrative I have made publick, and I know no undue or unfavory Expression (which they only Charge me with in general) I uttered among them, the greatest passion I was in, was that of Grief, to see their most unjust and inhuman proceedings; and I remember not in the least, that the Meeting, or any in the Meeting desired me to stay, after I rose up to go, and therefore I see not, why I should be blamed for going, having no occasion to stay longer with them, nor any expectation, they would hear my just Complaint, or give me any Tryal, but as it hath come to pass as I expected, they would, have condemned me without any Tryal, fair or unfair.

The 28th day of the
3d. Month, 1695.

G. Keith.

F I N I S.